



Australian Bureau of Statistics

2914.0.55.002 - 2006 Census of Population and Housing: Media Releases and Fact Sheets, 2006

ARCHIVED ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 27/06/2007 First Issue

MEDIA FACT SHEET

June 27, 2007

Embargoed 9.30 am (AEST)

70/2007

More than one in 25 Australians needs help with basic activities: Census

- Just over 4% of the Australian population, or around 822,000 people, needed daily assistance with basic activities such as self care, moving around or communicating, because of a long-term health condition, a disability or old age.
- The 'core activity – need for assistance' variable, collected for the first time in the 2006 Census, has been developed to measure the number of people with a profound or severe disability. The definition of someone with such a disability is 'a person needing help or assistance in one or more of the three core activities of self-care, mobility and communication because of a disability or a long-term health condition (lasting six months or more), or old age'. The census measure of 'need for assistance' therefore only counted a portion of all Australians with a disability.
- Men under the age of 75 years were slightly more likely than women to have a need for assistance with core activities. However older women were more likely to have a need for assistance than older men; for every man with a need for assistance over the age of 75 years there were 2 women of the same age with such a need for assistance. A contributing factor contribute to this is that women are more likely than men to survive to older ages.
- A higher proportion of Tasmanians (5.0%) and South Australians (4.8%) had a need for assistance of this type than the national average (4.1%). This difference can be partly explained by the older age of the population in these two states – the median age in Tasmania and South Australia was 39 years, compared to 37 years for the total Australian population.

One in 10 Australians give unpaid care

- The 'unpaid assistance to a person with a disability' question was asked for the first time in the 2006 Census. It measured the population over the age of 15 years that, in the two weeks prior to the Census, provided unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, long term illness or problems related to old age. Around 1.6 million Australians over the age of 15 provided unpaid care on this basis.
- Sixty two per cent of all unpaid carers in Australia were women. Women of every age were more likely to provide unpaid care than men of the same age, except those aged 75 years and over.
- More comprehensive statistics on Australians with a disability and their carers is provided by the *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers* (ABS cat. no. 4430.0).

Media Note: There is not a direct correspondence between persons with a need for assistance and people that provide unpaid assistance. People who provided unpaid care may have provided care to people not identified by the Census as

having a need for assistance, and vice versa.

NB: The figures in this fact sheet exclude overseas visitors. Where an answer to a question has not been provided (i.e. not stated) these occurrences form a separate category in the data and therefore some percentages do not total to 100%.

Source: ABS 2006 Census.

Table 1.1. 2006 Census: Persons with a need for assistance, states and territories(a)

	NSW %	Vic. %	Qld %	SA %	WA %	Tas. %	NT %	ACT %	Aust. %
Male	3.8	3.8	3.8	4.4	3.2	4.6	2.3	2.9	3.8
Female	4.6	4.6	4.1	5.3	3.8	5.3	2.5	3.5	4.5
Persons	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.8	3.5	5.0	2.4	3.2	4.1

(a) State/territory percentages include persons living in the relevant Capital City Statistical Division. The total for Australia includes people in Other Territories.

Table 1.2. 2006 Census: Persons with a need for assistance, capital cities

	Sydney %	Melbourne %	Brisbane %	Adelaide %	Perth %	Hobart %	Darwin %	Canberra %
Male	3.3	3.5	3.5	4.3	3.1	4.4	2.4	2.9
Female	4.2	4.5	4.0	5.4	3.9	5.3	2.4	3.5
Persons	3.8	4.0	3.7	4.9	3.5	4.9	2.4	3.2

Table 2.1. 2006 Census: Unpaid assistance to a person with a need for assistance, states and territories(a)

	NSW %	Vic. %	QLD %	SA %	WA %	Tas. %	NT %	ACT %	Aust. %
Male	8.3	8.1	7.3	8.7	6.8	8.5	6.0	8.0	7.9
Female	12.4	12.4	11.6	13.2	11.1	12.9	9.3	11.7	12.2
Persons	10.4	10.4	9.5	11.0	8.9	10.7	7.6	9.9	10.1

(a) State/territory percentages include persons living in the relevant Capital City Statistical Division. The total for Australia includes people in Other Territories.

Table 2.2. 2006 Census: Unpaid assistance to a person with a need for assistance, capital cities

	Sydney %	Melbourne %	Brisbane %	Adelaide %	Perth %	Hobart %	Darwin %	Canberra %
Male	7.8	7.9	7.4	8.8	6.9	8.7	5.4	8.0
Female	11.7	12.0	11.6	13.1	11.2	12.8	8.5	11.7
Persons	9.8	10.0	9.6	11.0	9.1	10.8	6.8	9.9

Table 3. 2006 Census: People who provided unpaid assistance in the two weeks prior to the Census, and people who have a need for assistance with core activities

	Provided unpaid assistance '000	Provided unpaid assistance %	Has need for assistance with core activities '000	Has need for assistance with core activities %
Male				
0-14 years	na	na	41.8	2.1
15-34 years	122.0	4.5	39.5	1.5
35-54 years	259.1	9.3	67.1	2.4
55-74 years	189.6	10.7	110.3	6.2
75 years and over	44.4	8.6	112.5	21.7
Total	615.0	7.9	371.0	3.8
Female				
0-14 years	na	na	21.8	1.1
15-34 years	188.9	7.0	29.6	1.1
35-54 years	448.4	15.4	64.1	2.2
55-74 years	303.7	16.9	104.0	5.8
75 years and over	50.1	6.7	231.1	30.7
Total	991.1	12.2	450.6	4.5
Persons				
0-14 years	na	na	63.6	1.6
15-34 years	310.9	5.8	69.1	1.3
35-54 years	707.5	12.4	131.1	2.3
55-74 years	493.3	13.8	214.3	6.0
75 years and over	94.5	7.4	343.6	27.0
Total	1 606.2	10.1	821.7	4.1

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This page last updated 27 June 2007

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